



Meet Daniela Diaz, MD

SITE MEDICAL DIRECTOR, MAMARONECK OPEN DOOR

Daniela Diaz, MD attended Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, graduated from Columbia University Medical School and completed her residency at New York-Presbyterian Hospital in 2015. She is currently pursuing a fellowship in the study of integrative medicine at the University of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine.

What excites you most about the opening of the new Open Door Mamaroneck health center?

There are so many things. I look forward to playing a leadership role in effecting change – bringing nutrition and wellness to the forefront, really integrating the health center into the community and creating better health outcomes for our patients. The overwhelming majority of medical problems that I see are related to diet, lack of physical activity and stress. Patients suffer from obesity, diabetes, abdominal complaints, and chronic fatigue. They have financial stresses, deportation worries, family crises etc. As a society, we still don't place enough emphasis on wellness. This is my opportunity to educate patients that it is not easy and it takes time, but it's worth it.

Why do you believe in federally qualified health care centers like Open Door?

It is a passion of mine to provide health care to the underserved. Federally qualified health centers are an important safety net for patients. Without them, many people would defer care, leading to worse outcomes and high emergency room usage. They are also fiscally advantageous for patients and for



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the overall health care system. I appreciate Open Door in particular because it is an innovative and passionate organization. Our size allows us to be more nimble in terms of patient care and have a large impact in the communities we serve. We run efficiently and have a great mission built on the idea that healthcare is a right.

You have a particular interest in nutrition and wellness. How does that influence the way you practice medicine, the way you run the Mamaroneck site?

I try to set up partnerships with patients, seeing where they are and what is important to them. A lot of patients are interested in losing weight, for instance, but might also be smokers. Instead of just focusing on what is more pressing to me, I can use motivational interviewing to help patients create a plan that is reasonable for them. How can they be creative, how can they lose weight by cutting out the low-hanging fruit like soda, what are the changes that are achievable for them? What is most important? They are in charge of their health; I am here to help them reach their wellness goals.

What are your influences?

My mom is a doctor so that was an early exposure to medicine. She was born in the Dominican Republic in a house with no indoor plumbing, and came as a teenager to this country speaking no English. Despite those challenging beginnings, she became a pediatrician, and is now director of the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center. She has always pushed the envelope—working tirelessly to provide access to free high-quality comprehensive health care for over 10,000 young people each year. Like her, I strive to change lives. I believe that with each patient, we help make the community as a whole, healthier.

What Do You Value?

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